

REMARKS

Claims 19-24, 26-31 and 33-36 are pending in the present application. Claims 19-23, 26, 30 and 33 have been amended. Claims 25 and 32 have been canceled.

Priority Under 35 U.S.C. 119

Applicants note the Examiner's acknowledgment of the Claim for Priority under 35 U.S.C. 119, and receipt of the certified copy of the priority document (in parent application Serial No. 09/358,366).

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 19, 20, 23, 24, 27-31 and 34-36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by the Motooka et al. reference (U.S. Patent No. 6,207,477).

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants respectfully note the Examiner's acknowledgment that claims 21, 22, 25, 26, 32 and 33 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

In view of the Examiner's acknowledgement of allowable subject matter, claim 19 has been amended to include the features of dependent claim 21, claim 23 has been amended to include the features of dependent claim 25, and claim 30 has been

amended to include the features of dependent claim 32. These amendments have been made merely to expedite prosecution of the present application in view of the Examiner's acknowledgement of allowable subject matter.

Conclusion

As noted above, the claims have been amended in view of the Examiner's acknowledgment of allowable subject matter, to incorporate the features of corresponding dependent claims. Since the independent claims now correspond in scope to the previously pending respective dependent claims, these corresponding amendments should not be construed as narrowing scope within the meaning of *Festo*.

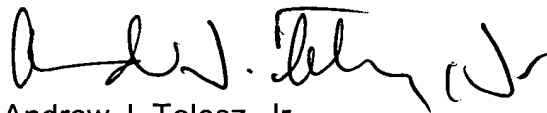
The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the corresponding rejection, and to pass the claims of the present application to issue, for at least the above reasons.

In the event that there are any outstanding matters remaining in the present application, please contact Andrew J. Telesz, Jr. (Reg. No. 33,581) at (571) 283-0720 in the Washington, D.C. area, to discuss these matters.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment for any additional fees that may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-0238.

Respectfully submitted,

VOLENTINE FRANCOS & WHITT, P.L.L.C.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. J. Telesz, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

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